

Pequannock Health Department Public Health Update – Thursday, September 7, 2023

Coming Soon- Watch for our New Quarterly Newsletter!

COVID-19 and Mental Health

Maintaining one's mental health is an essential part of achieving overall well-being, especially during times of crisis. During the height of the COVID pandemic, every facet of society was severely impacted. This intensified and sharply increased the growing problems that pre-existed COVID, such as addiction, dependency, suicide, depression, anxiety, domestic violence and a variety of negative mental health impacts.

- **Prevalence of Mental Illness**

The World Health Organization ranks mental health conditions, including alcohol and substance use disorders, as the leading cause of disability in the United States, affecting people of all ages and backgrounds. Approximately 1 in 4 adults experience a diagnosable mental disorder in a given year (approximately 61.5 million Americans) and 1 in 17 adults live with a serious mental illness such as schizophrenia or bipolar disorder. Yet more than half will not seek treatment. *Why?*

The primary reason individuals fail to seek the help they need is due to the stigma associated with the disease of mental illness. Main reasons cited are shame and fear of judgment from friends, family and co-workers. Such judgment is often rooted in a lack of knowledge or training. It's important to make the public aware of the help that is available so the information has a chance of reaching those most in need.

- **Available Mental Health Assistance and Addiction Resources**

Excellent resources are available for those seeking help. The links and the information about hotlines below may be helpful in connecting individuals who can benefit from talking to someone about how they are feeling or to get the help and support they need:

NJ 211

Information about virtual support groups and hotlines are available through various organizations: Call 211 or click <https://www.nj211.org/mental-health-resources>

988 Suicide and Crisis Line Number

New Jerseyans are now able to use **988** to reach the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline. **988** will be available for call, text, or chat to those experiencing a mental health-related or suicidal crisis, or those looking to help a loved one through a crisis. The existing Lifeline number, 1-800-273-8255, will also continue to be available. The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline is available to persons of all abilities, including those with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) and traumatic brain injury (TBI). Providers rendering services to persons with IDD and/or TBI are reminded that **988 is distinct from 911**. Under [Danielle's Law P.L. 2003, c.191](#), **911 must continue to be called in any situation where a prudent person could reasonably believe a life threatening emergency exists**. More information on Danielle's Law can be found [here](#). For more information about 988, please visit the [Division of Mental Health and Addiction Services 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline website](#). Additionally, a helpful *Frequently Asked Questions* document for persons with IDD can be found [here](#).

NJ Department of Human Services Division of Mental Health and Addiction Services

Call 1-844-276-2777 or click <https://nj.gov/humanservices/dmhas/home/hotlines/>

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Service Administration 24 Hour Hotline

1-800-985-5990

New Jersey Coalition to End Domestic Violence (NJCEDV)

1-800-572-SAFE (7233)

Deaf Videophone: **1-855-812-1001**

Text LOVEIS to 22522

<https://njcedv.org/covid19/>

New Jersey Mental Health Cares

1-866-202-HELP (4357)

8 A.M. to 8 P.M. 7 days a week

National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI)

For more information on the disease of mental illness, visit www.nami.org

1-800-950-6264

naminj.org/online-support-groups

NAMI text helpline- Text NAMI to 741741 24/7

Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance

1-800-273-TALK (8255)

dbsalliance.org

Jersey Battered Women’s Service, Inc. (JBWS)

Text Line 973-314-4192

Hotline 973-267-4763

Mental Health America

mentalhealthamerica.net

Morris County Mental Health Resources

For information about resources in Morris County, visit the [Morris County Human Services Stigma Free](#) page.

Passaic County Mental Health Resources

For information about resources in Passaic County, visit the Passaic County Services page at:

<https://www.passaiccountynj.org/departments/human-services/mental-health-and-addiction-services>

COVID-19

- **Pandemic Status**

United States ended the COVID public health emergency on May 11, 2023. WHO ended the global health emergency declaration for COVID-19 on May 5, 2023. Though still technically a global pandemic, the reduced impact of COVID-19 has prompted an end to the declarations of these public health emergencies.

COVID hospitalizations and deaths are each up around 21% in the U.S. since last week, though they remain historically low compared to the same time of year in past summers.

The uptick coincides with the rise of the EG.5 variant, which some health experts nicknamed “ERIS” on social media. EG.5 now represents more than 20% of COVID cases in the U.S. Currently, there are still XBB subvariants of Omicron that together, are still dominating but EG.5, which is also from the Omicron lineage, is expected to be the dominating subvariant across the country very soon, if it isn’t already.

Scientists are also paying attention to a new variant, BA.2.86, that carries a large number of mutations — meaning it looks significantly different from the original version of Omicron and the previously dominant strain targeted by the upcoming COVID booster shots this fall. Only [nine cases](#) have been detected in the U.S. thus far.

- **State and County-wide COVID Activity**

For the latest Statewide COVID Activity Report that specifies the Risk Levels by County (usually updated by the State each Friday), please click the following link:

<https://www.nj.gov/health/cd/statistics/covid/>

Please see the **links below for the NJDOH COVID Activity Dashboard, the NJ County COVID Activity Reports and the links to the Morris and Passaic County Health Department COVID Websites.** For Morris County, cases by municipality may be found in the Morris County link below.

NJDOH Dashboard:

https://www.nj.gov/health/cd/topics/covid2019_dashboard.shtml

Statewide and Regional COVID Activity Report and Risk Level by County:

<https://www.nj.gov/health/cd/statistics/covid/>

Morris County-Based COVID Information including Data for Total Positive Cases by Municipality and COVID Testing Availability:

<https://health.morriscountynj.gov/coronavirus/>

Passaic County-Based COVID Information including Testing Availability:

<https://www.passaiccountynj.org/departments/health/covid-19>

COVID-19 Testing Options

- **For All New Jersey Residents**

For more information, click on the following link: <https://covid19.nj.gov/pages/testing>

- **Morris County**

For more information, please see the Morris County website at

<https://www.morriscountynj.gov/Residents/Health/Coronavirus/Get-a-Covid-19-Test>

- **Passaic County**

For more information, please see the Passaic County website at <https://www.passaiccountynj.org/departments/health/covid-19>

- **Atlantic Health System**

Atlantic Health System's dedicated testing locations or other community testing sites are listed on the following link:

<https://www.atlantichealth.org/conditions-treatments/coronavirus-covid-19/covid-testing.html>.

COVID-19 Vaccination

Vaccines are never 100% effective. People must balance preventive actions with vaccination to reduce possible transmission and maintain safety. When making decisions about using precautions and/or getting vaccinated/boosted, consider a risk/ benefit approach based on age, overall health, underlying medical conditions and in consultation with a trusted healthcare provider.

People who have weakened immune systems should especially consider practicing precautions and vaccination during times of substantial or high transmission of influenza, RSV and COVID.

For Updated COVID-19 Vaccination and Booster Information, please click on the following links:

➤ CDC <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/index.html>

➤ NJDOH <https://covid19.nj.gov/pages/vaccine>

➤ Atlantic Health System bit.ly/3qC2rfN

- There are Multiple Ways to Get Vaccinated and Boosted. Appointment Based or Walk-up clinics are Now Easily Accessible. For up-to-date vaccine locations in New Jersey, please visit covid19.nj.gov/finder.

Travel

For updated CDC/NJDOH Travel Information and guidance, please follow the links below:

- NJDOH <https://covid19.nj.gov/faqs/nj-information/travel-and-transportation/are-there-travel-restrictions-to-or-from-new-jersey>
- CDC <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/travel-during-covid19.html>

K thru 12 Schools, Childcare and Youth Camp Operations

K thru 12 schools, childcare facilities and youth camps have specific guidance unique to these institutions. Guidance for K-12, Childcare and Youth Camps may be found at the following link: [COVID-19 Public Health Recommendations for K-12 Schools, Childcare and Youth Camps](#) (Released August 31, 2023)

Executive Orders and Executive Directives

Please note, Executive Orders or Executive Directives may be issued by the Governor or the Commissioner of Health at any time to establish or relax restrictions on certain businesses, institutions, social activities and gatherings. For up to date and more complete information, please refer to the entire contents of the Executive Orders and Executive Directives listed at the links below.

Please see the link below for all **Executive Orders** to date:

https://nj.gov/infobank/eo/056murphy/approved/eo_archive.shtml

Please see the link below for an up to date list of **Executive Directives** of the NJDOH:

<https://www.state.nj.us/health/legal/covid19/>

Respiratory Illnesses

The season for elevated respiratory illnesses is quickly approaching!

- **Important Safety Precautions to Protect against Influenza, RSV, and COVID-19**
- Get vaccinated!
- Get boosted!
- Distance six or more feet when possible
- Wear masks/face coverings as recommended by the CDC: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/about-face-coverings.html>
- Keep indoor spaces well ventilated to the greatest extent possible
- Practice hand hygiene
- Avoid touching the eyes, nose or mouth
- Disinfect commonly touched surfaces
- Stay home when symptomatic
- Get tested when appropriate and recommended
- Follow all of the requirements and advisories set forth in the Executive Orders, Executive Directives and Travel Advisories that might be in effect.
- Adhere to the latest CDC/NJDOH isolation and precautionary recommendations:
 - NJDOH https://www.nj.gov/health/cd/topics/covid2019_community.shtml
 - CDC <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/your-health/isolation.html>
- Strengthen the immune system by:
 - Getting good nutrition with a healthy diet. Consult your healthcare provider about supplementing with Vitamin D, Vitamin C, and zinc
 - Getting enough sleep
 - Exercising. Consult your physician about what regimen is best for you.
 - Maintaining mental health and managing stress. Learn to recognize those times when you may need to employ destressing techniques or seek support.
 - Keeping on schedule with healthcare visits

When making decisions about using precautions and getting vaccinated/boosted, consider a risk/ benefit approach based on age, overall health, underlying medical conditions and in consultation with a trusted healthcare provider.